

# UNTOLD

STORY LEADS FROM MONTANA



SPRING 2000 • [visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com)

## A Grand Way to Spend an Evening



*Grand Union Hotel, Fort Benton, Montana.*

**Standing in the lobby of Fort Benton's Grand Union Hotel, you sense that you have stepped back in time.**

The hotel's original staircase and front desk still stand. The Grand Union, built in 1882, was the resting-place for wealthy traders who came by steamboat to Montana's oldest town. Today, the newly renovated hotel continues to offer travelers a comfortable home on the legendary Missouri River.

The \$1.5 million renovation project was completed in November 1999. Montana natives Jim and Cheryl Gagnon bought the

**"What we tried to do here is keep the Victorian charm and add a western flair."**

*- Cheryl Gagnon*

hotel in 1995. The couple had been living in Asia for 13 years, but they wanted to return to Montana. They viewed the purchase of the hotel as the ticket. Jim, a former bank executive, handled the financial side of the project, while Cheryl, an accomplished commercial designer, created the hotel's interior and furnishings.

According to Cheryl, the three-story brick hotel was built in Victorian manner. "What we tried to do here is keep the Victorian charm and add a western flair. We still want guests to know they are in Montana." For example, Cheryl explains, visitors will find western leather-studded furniture and western art on the walls.

But don't let the age of the building fool you. The hotel's 27 rooms are equipped with computer modems, voice mail and private modern baths, as well as a meeting room for business retreats and receptions. The Gagnons plan to have a chef aboard by spring to handle the restaurant and bar.

Cheryl says most people who have come to stay have a story associated with the hotel. "One couple spent their wedding night here in 1942 and came back to spend their second honeymoon," says Cheryl. "It's been rewarding to hear that people appreciate what we have done."

For a step back in time with 21st-century amenities, visit the Grand Union Hotel. For more information call (406) 622-1882 or (888) 838-1882.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Birds of a Feather: Medicine Lake Refuge**

**The Teller Wildlife Refuge**

**Chico Hot Springs' 4 R's**

**A Picture Paints a Thousand Words**

**At Trail's End: The Bozeman Trail**

# Birds of a Feather

**Every spring, the staff at the Medicine Lake Refuge wait for some regular guests to flock in—10,000 white pelicans, that is.**

Come April this mighty bird, with a wingspan of nine feet, migrates from the Gulf of Mexico to its home in northeastern Montana. According to Refuge Manager, Ted Gutzke, Medicine Lake has one of the largest white pelican rookeries left in the United States. More than 2,000 pelicans are produced each year.

But pelicans are not the only birds that find respite here. Double-crested cormorants, California and ring-billed gulls and great blue herons also nest at this 49-square-mile area.

"A lot of avid birders travel to the refuge so they can add birds to their life lists," says Gutzke. "The refuge is home to the rare Baird's sparrow and the threatened piping plovers." Another unique aspect of the refuge, he says, is the attached 11,360-acre wilderness area.



Gutzke says opportunities for wildlife observation and photography are plentiful. A self-guided 14-mile scenic auto tour is open from late April through September. A 100-foot observation tower is available year-round. Gutzke suggests the best months to view wildlife are May and October. Portions of the refuge are open to hunting and fishing.

*Pelicans at Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge.*

For more information on the Medicine Lake Refuge call (406) 789-2305. To find out about other wildlife viewing opportunities across Montana, click on Travel Montana's new watchable wildlife site [www.wildlife.visitmt.com](http://www.wildlife.visitmt.com)

## Refuge in Southwest Montana



*The Burroughs House, Built in 1881.*

**The Teller Wildlife Refuge sits on the banks of Montana's blue-ribbon Bitterroot River and is framed by the dramatic Bitterroot Range to the west and the gentle Sapphire Mountains to the east.**

According to Mary Stone, Guest Manager at the refuge, this 1,300-acre gem

inspires feelings of "refuge" for human visitors as well as for the birds and wildlife that use the area.

The Teller Refuge is one of the first privately owned and managed wildlife refuges in Montana. The area

is comprised of farmland and river bottom environments which host a remarkable variety of species including moose, elk, beavers, foxes, geese, ducks, herons, ospreys and eagles. A spring creek also seeps from the refuge, where fisherman may be challenged by its population of wily brown and rainbow trout. The refuge is dedicated to maintaining and improv-

ing its riparian resources, and in fact, habitat improvement projects for fish and birds are ongoing.

Mary Stone explains that the refuge is a secluded spot where one can observe wildlife all day and relax in one of the five charming farmhouses at night. Two of the homes were originally built in the 1870s. Guests may choose to be pampered with full dining and maid service or cook their own meals in a well-furnished country kitchen. Mary says the staff doesn't push the refuge philosophy on guests, but if they are interested in listening there is plenty to share. However, she adds, "Many visitors feel that by coming here, their vacation money is going towards something beneficial for all people."

Need more information? Contact the Teller Wildlife Refuge at (406) 961-3707 or (800) 343-3707.



# Chico Hot Springs' 4 R's

**R**elax, rejuvenate and recuperate—these were the three R's that Chico Warm Springs provided guests in 1900. One hundred years later, a fourth R, romance, adds to the charm at Chico Hot Springs Lodge.

"Memories are made at this 'historically romantic' resort," says Colin Davis, Chico's General Manager. "Chico is a destination in itself, a quintessential Montana experience."

Located in the Paradise Valley corridor between Livingston and Yellowstone National Park, Chico first opened its doors 100 years ago as a therapeutic lodge with a hospital wing. Today, the resort provides a unique blend of rustic rooms with shared bathrooms to log homes and private cabins. Guests can choose to dine on filet mignon or burgers.

Chico is upper class without being pretentious. Locals garbed in blue jeans and cowboy boots may sit next to movie stars. In fact, actor Steve McQueen came to Chico wanting peace and quiet so he checked into the resort under an assumed name. After a week of non-notoriety, a local rancher started a

friendly conversation with him. When the rancher asked him his name he replied, "Steve McQueen." The rancher responded, "Pleased to meet you. What do you do?"



Besides the year-round, outdoor mineral pools, Chico offers visitors fly fishing, horseback riding and mountain biking. In the winter, guests can take a dog sled trek or cross-country ski at nearby Yellowstone National Park.

Chico will kick off its 100th birthday bash with its annual summer series that brings in multicultural events for locals and visitors alike. Why not make your own memories at Chico? Call (800) HOT-WADA or visit [www.chicohotsprings.com](http://www.chicohotsprings.com).

## At Trail's End

### The Bozeman Trail

**T**he Bozeman Trail dates from 1863 to 1868. The trail stretched from current-day Casper, Wyoming, north to Billings and west to Bozeman, Montana. The trail began as a shortcut route to Montana's gold fields in Virginia City. While only about 3,500 emigrants traveled the trail from 1864-1866, its most significant consequence was that it cut through the best hunting grounds of the Northern Plains Indians. This ultimately led to a military presence in the region and Indian wars.

The Frontier Heritage Alliance, a non-profit organization with members in Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota and Nebraska, is helping to coordinate and promote cultural heritage sites, events and themes along the trail. The group has joined with Indian tribes, government agencies, historic organizations and towns on this project.

One organized project is a traveling exhibit of the recently discovered diaries, drawings and paintings of Major Robert Dunlap Clarke, the paymaster on the Bozeman Trail from 1867 to 1868. The exhibit is being prepared at the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming. In Montana the display can be viewed at Hardin's Big Horn County Museum from July 15 through August 15, the Yellowstone Dam Museum near Fort Smith, August 16-31, and Chief Plenty Coups State Park in Pryor, September 1-15.

To find out about Bozeman Trail tours or cultural events in Montana, click to [www.visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com) or visit [www.bozemantrail.org](http://www.bozemantrail.org).



Virginia City

## A Picture Paints A Thousand Words

**T**he only physical evidence of the Lewis and Clark Expedition is Captain William Clark's signature at Pompeys Pillar. Almost 200 years later the town of Whitehall, Montana, is leaving its own mark of the upcoming Lewis and Clark Bicentennial on downtown buildings. Four brightly colored murals depicting scenes from the expedition were completed last summer.



The Whitehall Chamber of Commerce is the principal sponsor of the mural project. The group decided that something needed to be

done to give Whitehall a sense of pride. "This project was a complete community effort," says Renea Cassidy, Director of the Chamber. "Local artists volunteered their time to create and paint the murals and many of the town's businesses donated money to pay for paints and supplies." She adds that even the area's children helped with the painting.

The murals depict actual events that members of the expedition experienced as they passed through this area during their 1803-1806 journey. Cassidy explains that the murals have brought a sense of warmth and welcome to this town located along the Jefferson River in southwest Montana.

The chamber is creating a brochure that outlines a walking tour for visitors to view the creations. Whitehall hopes to have eight more murals completed by this fall. Want to discover Whitehall? Contact Renea Cassidy at the Whitehall Chamber of Commerce at (406) 287-2260.

## MARCH

- 2-5 **Big Mountain Winter Classic**—  
*Whitefish 862-2900*
- 3-5 **Winter Carnival—Red Lodge**—  
*446-1718 or 446-1720*
- 3-5 **Spring Gun Show—Hamilton** 777-5861
- 3-5 **Billings Home Improvement Show**—*Billings 259-3114 or 860-3915*
- 4 **Ben Ali Haggins Mile High Nordic Ski Race**—*Butte 782-0900*
- 4 **Montana's Irish Festival**—  
*Helena 442-3263*
- 4 **Banked Slalom—Missoula** 549-9777
- 4-5 **4th Annual Marshall Mountain Snowmobile Hillclimb Championship**—*Missoula 258-6000*
- 10-12 **Custom Car Show**—*Great Falls 453-8808*
- 11 **Milk River Wagon Train Feed and Dance**—*Malta 654-1100 or 654-1796*
- 11 **Freestyle Bump-off**—*Neihart 236-5522*
- 11 **32nd Annual Art Auction**—  
*Billings 256-6804*
- 11 **Annual St. Patrick's Race**—  
*Anaconda 563-2909*
- 11 **Rendezvous Cross-Country Ski Race**—*West Yellowstone 646-7701*
- 11-12 **National Ski Joring Finals**—  
*Red Lodge 446-3232*
- 15-18 **C.M. Russell Auction of Original Western Art**—*Great Falls 761-6453 or 761-4239*
- 16-18 **Irish Music Fest**—*Butte 782-0742 or 782-1859*
- 16-19 **World Snowmobile Expo**—  
*West Yellowstone 646-7701*
- 17 **St. Patrick's Day Celebration**—  
*Butte 782-0742 or 782-1859*
- 17 **St. Patrick's Day Parade**—*Anaconda 563-5494*
- 18 **Equine Expo**—*Helena 442-8551*
- 18 **Telemark Classic**—*Missoula 549-9777*
- 18-19 **9th Annual Snow Rodeo and Spring Ski Race**—*Essex 888-5700*
- 18-19 **Upper Yellowstone Expo—Trade Show**—*Livingston 222-0850*
- 18-19 **Snowboard Camp**—*Whitefish 862-2909*
- 19 **23rd Annual Belt Creek Headwaters Relay**—*Neihart 236-5522*
- 19 **Spring Fling and Trade Show**—  
*Lewistown 538-3441 or 538-3442*
- 24 **Waitress Cup**—*Whitefish 862-2900*
- 24-26 **Cabin Fever Gun Show**—*Bozeman 586-6179*
- 24-26 **Northwest Montana Arms Collectors' Gun Show**—*Kalispell 755-3980*
- 24-26 **Montana Outdoor Recreation Exposition**—*Billings 657-1269 or 657-1246*
- 25 **Pinhead Classic**—*Bozeman 586-1518*
- 26 **North Dakota Downhill**—  
*Missoula 549-9777*

## APRIL

- 1 **Double Pole, Pad and Pedal**—  
*Bozeman 586-1518*
- 1 **Horse Fair 2000**—*Bozeman 582-3270*
- 1 **Run for the Trees**—*Missoula 721-7275*
- 6-9 **Great Falls Dixieland Jazz Festival**—  
*Great Falls 771-1642*
- 7-8 **NILE Bull Riders Invitational**—  
*Billings 256-2495*
- 7-8 **MSU Indian Club Pow-Wow**—  
*Bozeman 994-3751 or 994-4880*
- 7-8 **Spring Fling Home Garden Expo**—  
*Glendive 365-5601*
- 8 **Annual Furniture Race**—  
*Whitefish 862-2900*
- 8 **16th Annual Spring Art & Craft Show**—  
*Helena 449-4790*
- 9 **Mannequin Jumping**—*Neihart 236-5522*
- 14-15 **6th Annual Story Telling Roundup**—*Cut Bank 873-2039 or 873-2295*
- 14-15 **Earth Year 2000**—*Billings 652-8100*
- 14-16 **Home Show 2000 Great Falls Homebuilder's Association—20th Year**—*Great Falls 452-4663*
- 14-16 **Tobacco Valley Rendezvous**—  
*Eureka 889-4636*
- 15-16 **Helena Mineral Society's 52nd Annual Gem & Mineral Show**—  
*Helena 449-1226 or 442-5172*
- 15-22 **International Wildlife Film Festival**—  
*Missoula 728-9380*
- 28-5/28 **Montana WaterColor Society Member's Open Show**—*Lewistown 728-0189*
- 29 **10th Annual Railroad Swap Meet**—  
*Livingston 222-2300*
- 30 **The Kite Festival & Spring Fling Fun Runs**—*Helena 443-4608*
- 30 **20th Annual Helena Railroad Fair**—*Helena 443-0315 or 443-1578*
- 30 **2000 Ice Breaker Road Race**—  
*Great Falls 771-1265*

## MAY

- 5 **Artwalk Downtown**—*Billings 252-0122*
- 5-7 **Essexpress Railfan Weekend**—*Essex 888-5700*
- 5-7 **Antique Gun & Knife Show**—  
*Butte 441-3232*
- 6-7 **Bitterroot Horse and Mule Expo**—  
*Hamilton 363-3411*
- 7 **Peter Paddlefish Day & Kite Festival**—*Sidney 482-1916*
- 10-12 **Special Olympics Summer Games**—  
*Billings 268-6759*
- 12-14 **Buffalo Feast and Pow-Wow**—  
*St. Ignatius 745-2951*
- 12-14 **NILE Spring AQHA Horse Show**—  
*Billings 256-2495*
- 15 **International Migratory Bird Day**—  
*Moiese 644-2211 ext. 207*
- 13 **Montana Women's Run**—*Billings 656-6973*
- 13 **Mullan Day**—*Superior 822-4626*

- 13 **Spring Cycle Tour/Lakeside Ride**—  
*West Yellowstone 646-7701*
- 14-21 **Historic Preservation Week**—  
*Kalispell 756-8381*
- 15 **Montana Peace Officers Memorial Day**—*Deer Lodge 846-3777*
- 15-20 **MSU-Billings Wine Festival**—  
*Billings 657-2244*
- 19-21 **Miles City Bucking Horse Sale**—  
*Miles City 232-2890*
- 19-21 **May Fair Fling**—*Missoula 721-3247*
- 19-21 **Stumptown Days**—*Whitefish 862-3501*
- 20 **Garden City Micro BRIW Fest**—  
*Missoula 721-6061*
- 20 **Heart & Sole Run**—*Billings 237-3600 or 237-3603*
- 20 **Montana Race for the Cure**—*Helena 227-7286*
- 20 **Community Watershed Festival**—  
*Bozeman 582-0526*
- 20-21 **Billings Gem & Mineral Annual Show**—*Billings 656-5707 or 252-6502*
- 26-28 **Bigfork Whitewater Festival**—  
*Bigfork 837-9914*
- 26-28 **Whoop-Up Days**—*Conrad 278-3612 or 278-7791*
- 26-28 **Artists and Craftsmen of the Flathead Summer Show**—*Kalispell 881-4288*
- 26-29 **Black Powder Shoot**—*Havre 265-2483*
- 27 **Horseback Poker Run**—*Virginia City 843-5484*
- 27 **Mount Powell Pro Lumberjack Show & Dance**—*Deer Lodge 846-2205 or 846-2055*
- 27-28 **Loon & Fish Festival**—*Seeley Lake 677-2204*
- 28 **Crazy Mountain Museum Festival**—  
*Big Timber 932-4451*

For a complete list of events, see us at [visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com)

## FROM MONTANA

The diversity of events, places and people in Montana is almost as wide as the state itself. We hope to give you a taste of that diversity with this quarterly newsletter. In addition, my office offers these services to editors, writers and producers.

### Visual Materials

Color slides, 8" x 10" B/W photos and stock video footage are available for editorial use.

### Writer/Photographer Referrals

We can put you in contact with many of Montana's most talented and experienced freelance writers and photographers.

### Editorial Copy/Calendar of Events

We can provide background information or editorial copy for many subjects. We also maintain a calendar of events for the entire state.

### Individual Attention

If you need the latest vacation guide and road map of Montana, a liaison with other government agencies or detailed information to fit a specific story angle, we're here to assist you.

Mary Boyle, Publicity Coordinator